

Main topic areas discussed in MPAR WG Breakout Meeting, Greenbelt, October 19, 2004

1. PRIVACY ISSUE

This issue came up during a discussion of collecting metrics data from Web logs. Some institutions/agencies have a policy of not releasing Web logs. It was noted that there is a difference between releasing, or 'handing over,' a Web log versus providing data summaries from a Web log.

WG Action:

Each of us must follow our local policy on this. The MPAR WG however, sees no issue with participants providing metrics data that were derived from Web logs and that protected user confidentiality. The metrics we are talking about here are the current baseline set, or the Top 10 metrics, that the WG has already endorsed. These metrics do not include any information about individual users. There is no requirement for a REASoN project to provide any data about individual users.

Additional review comments on this issue received after Greenbelt meeting:

The WG had numerous comments on providing Web log data that may conflict with privacy and security issues. Some members see the transfer of Web log information to a central site that parses log files as advantageous (reduces overall effort, uniform reporting, more flexible information extraction) but that approach may not be tenable because of host agency/organization policy. One member from Langley referenced a document, *NASA Internet Publishing Content Guidelines*, November 15, 2001, that was apparently used by Langley to implement constraints on handling Web log data. That guideline is not readily available online; at least two Web site locations, MSFC and GSFC, have restricted access to the document.

The WG needs to further discuss and resolve this issue in FY2005.

2. BETTER METRICS

Subgroup Reports

The Education Subgroup will look into developing 'next generation' Education Metrics to serve the six education REASoNs, and others. This unique community will look at quantitative and qualitative data. Development of these new metrics will require a survey.

The Unique Methods Subgroup was renamed New Metrics Subgroup and will review the recent ACSI Survey for possible new/improved metrics for REASoNs. The subgroup

also proposed that the WG experiment with a small group of sites in automating centralized metrics collection.

WG Action:

A. Education subgroup will develop and report on new Education Metrics.

B. New Metrics subgroup will examine and report on ACSI Survey for new/improved metrics. (A copy of the ACSI Survey Analysis Report was provided to Wes Berg by Greg Hunolt.)

C. The WG decided to conduct a limited experiment on automating data collection. This will have to be coordinated through Rama and Paul Davis.

Note: A and B will get reported out as part of the Annual update to metrics baseline (by March 2005), one of the 4 major elements of the WG's FY2005 Plan. Item C is also a major element (Automation Experiment) of the 2005 plan.

Concerns over Top 10 Questions 8, 9, and 10

Although WG members stated that there were no real show stoppers in the Top 10 Metrics collection, Questions 8, 9 and 10 were confusing and problematic. Below is Question 8. It is convoluted and will not be easy to respond to. A lot is asked here.

"Please list any products or services that support NASA ESE's Science Focus Areas and how many users were so provided within the last reporting period, and include which of the NASA categories they most correctly fit (may be multiple). This category is subject to definition between the REASoN management and their NASA program manager."

WG Action:

No specific action was discussed. However, the WG should establish an 8-9-10 subgroup to do a quick examination of these questions and recommend alternatives. If the WG is setting out to find and recommend new metrics it has an obligation to critically examine the current metrics.

3. SURVEYS

This issue mainly affects the Education Subgroup. It was apparent that the WG looks to surveys as an important tool in the overall scheme of metrics collection. There was much discussion on Government survey policy. No survey can be conducted without OMB approval. Expedited processes may be available, for example, see The Paperwork Reduction Act and Customer Surveys at <http://www.cio.noaa.gov/itmanagement/pracust.htm>. It was also noted that the ESIP Federation may be able to provide support for surveys. This was noted as a worthwhile

suggestion that should be pursued. Bottom line: conducting a public survey is no small matter. This can easily be a very time consuming process.

WG Action:

- A. Follow up on this and see if NASA HQ has a pre-approved survey mechanism that the WG can use (ala ACSI Survey).
- B. Follow up on suggestion to discuss this issue with the ESIP Federation.
- C. If neither of the above pan out consider the merits of going the full route to OMB for approval.

4. IMPROVED METRICS COLLECTION PARTICIPATION

Rama noted that only 6 of the 42 REASoNs have started supplying metrics data to the University of Maryland Metrics Tool. Various reasons were given for the low turn out – prolonged negotiations (i.e., late starts), mixed signals as to their obligation, and unclear start date information.

WG Action:

Rama will send monthly reminders to all REASoN awardees requesting their participation, even if they have no metrics to report. This was identified as a major element of the WG's 2005 plan.

5. COLLECTION AND REPORTING TOOL

The UMD Metrics Tool successfully demonstrated the metrics baseline. The improvements that had been recommended by the WG earlier this year had been grouped into Phase 1 and Phase 2. Phase 1 improvements were completed by the end of September. Phase 2 improvements were discussed and were identified as major elements of the WG's FY 2005 working plan.

WG Action:

- A. The UMD Metrics Tool will be migrated to GSFC with a REASoN focus.
- B. Paul Davis will release the revised version of the Metrics Tool consisting of Phase 1 improvements as soon as possible. Rama will send out an announcement of this along with the first monthly reminder.
- C. Paul Davis mentioned numerous Phase 2 enhancements to the Metrics Tool. Paul will report on the progress of this implementation, some of which could occur soon.

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